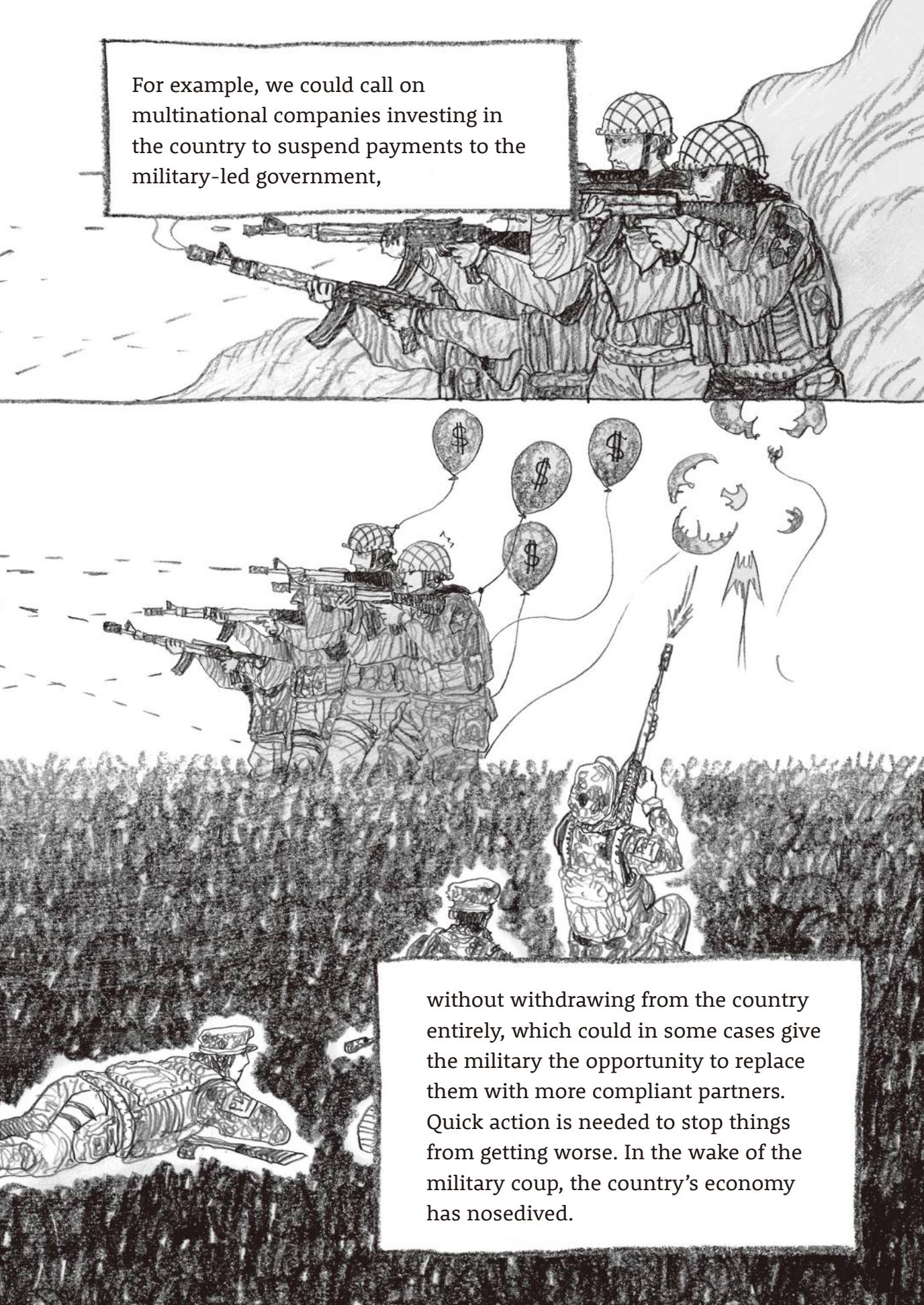


For example, we could call on multinational companies investing in the country to suspend payments to the military-led government,



without withdrawing from the country entirely, which could in some cases give the military the opportunity to replace them with more compliant partners. Quick action is needed to stop things from getting worse. In the wake of the military coup, the country's economy has nosedived.



Now we
only eat one
meal a day.

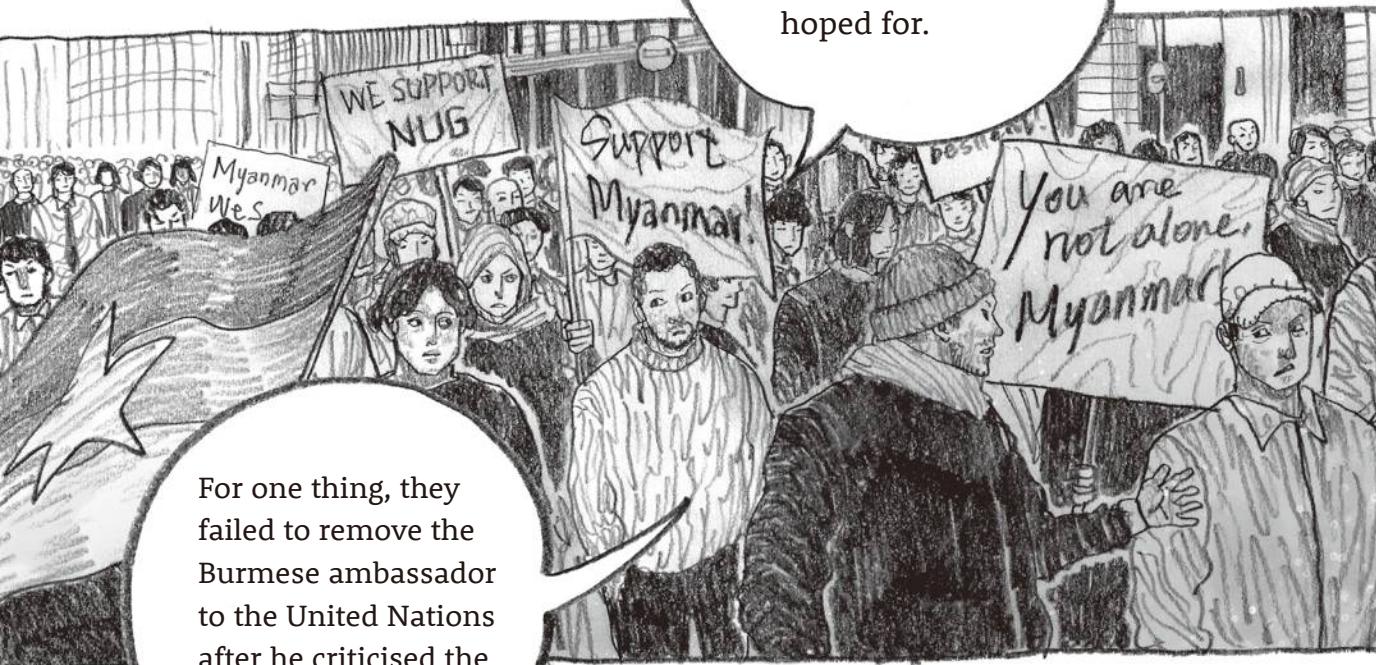


I don't want
my family to
go hungry.

A 26 year-old worker
who lost his night job at a
factory due to the curfew.



In urban areas,
unemployment is rising, and
so is the cost of food.



For one thing, they failed to remove the Burmese ambassador to the United Nations after he criticised the coup,

much to the annoyance of the putschist generals.

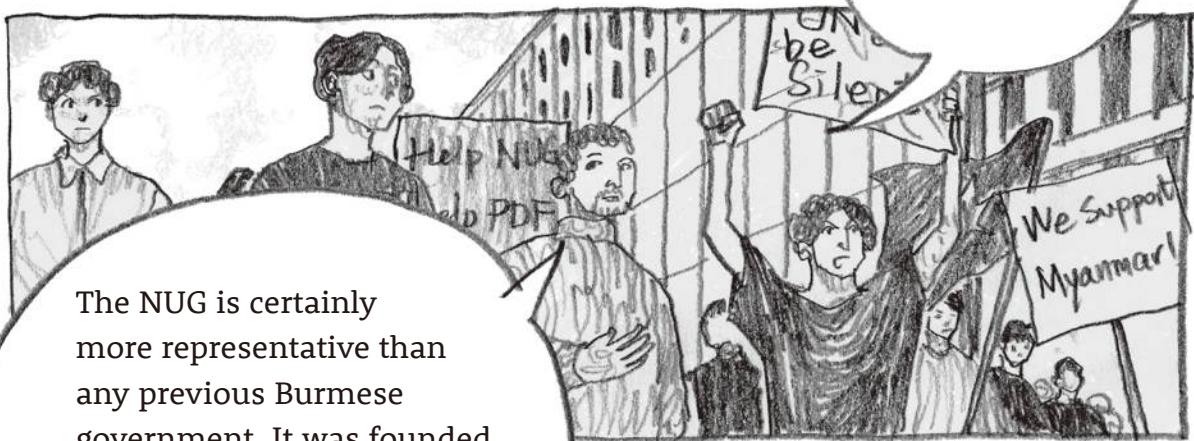
Also,





the new National Unity Government (NUG), which rightly sees itself as more legitimate than the army to represent Myanmar internationally,

is gaining some traction.



The NUG is certainly more representative than any previous Burmese government. It was founded following the military coup by politicians from the National League for Democracy and other sections of society.

It is made up of a people from a wide range of ethnicities and all generations, a third of its ministers are women.

An LGBT+ activist is the minister for human rights,



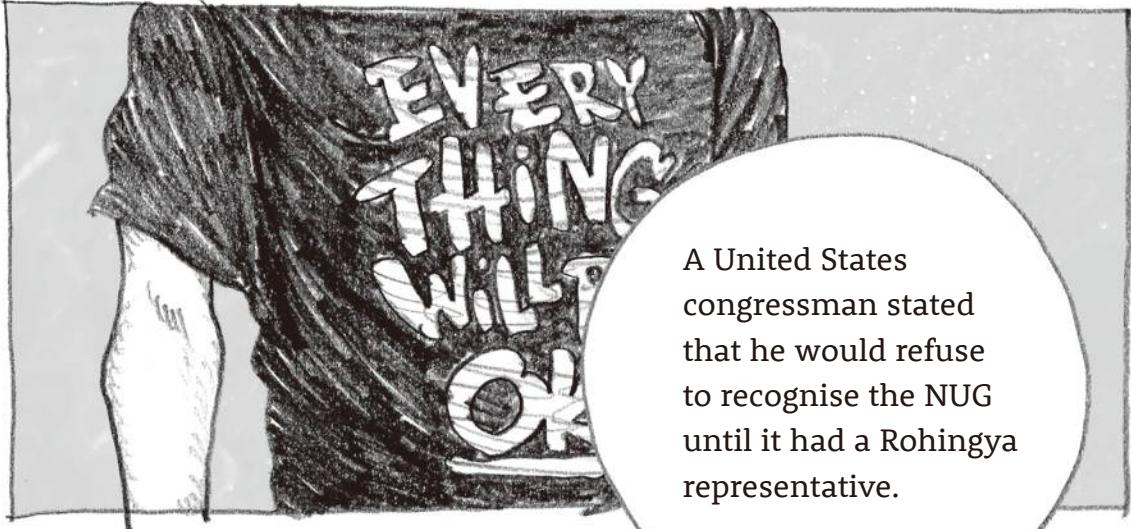
and an activist who spoke out for the rights of the Rohingya people when the rest of the country was against them, is tasked with women's and youth affairs.



While this government is forced to operate in exile and secrecy, and does not enjoy universal popularity – some of the ethnic armed groups organisations have withheld their support,

it does provide a real alternative to the military junta.





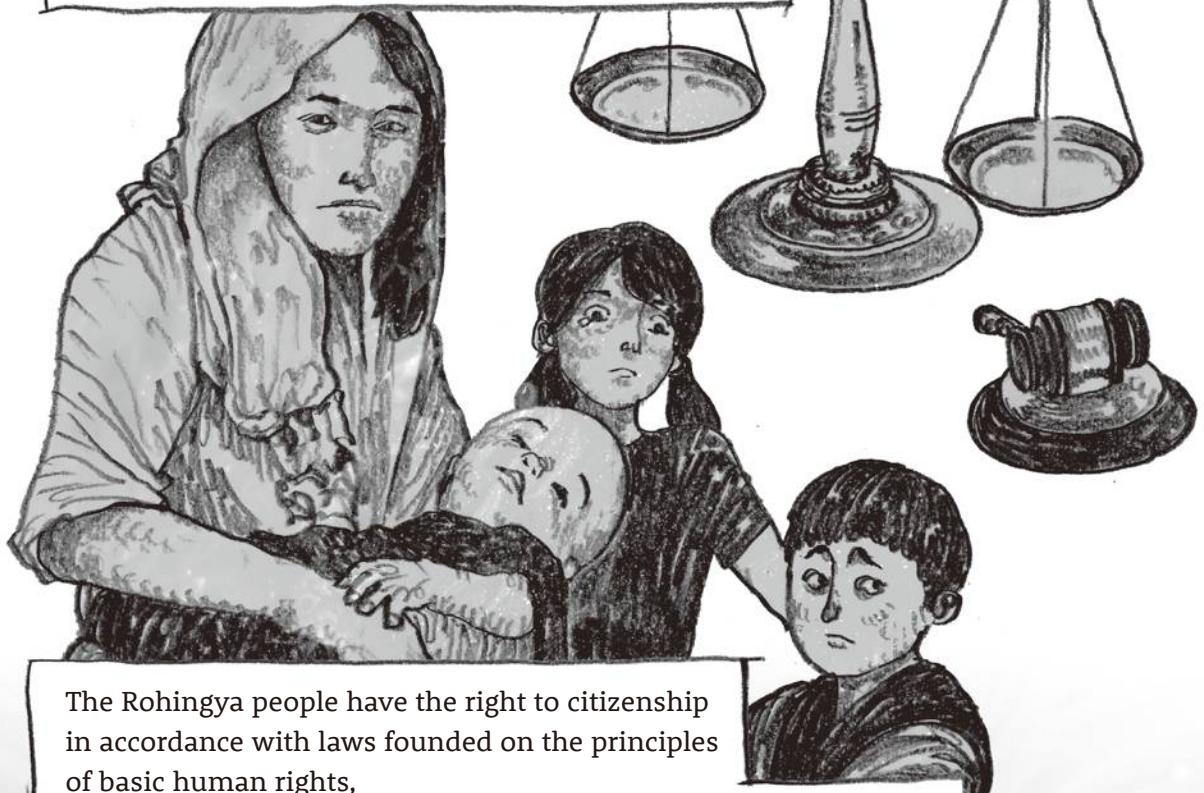
A United States congressman stated that he would refuse to recognise the NUG until it had a Rohingya representative.

Perhaps he didn't know that it would be virtually impossible for all the country's multitude of minorities to be represented in one government.

But given how the Rohingya have been particularly targeted in Myanmar, including by pro-democracy activists, this outside pressure was welcomed.

The NUG finally released a statement clarifying its position:

The National Unity Government is fully aware of the violence and gross human rights violations inflicted upon the Rohingya people by an army of thugs, and of the mass displacement of hundreds of thousands of people from this minority, who have been forced to flee their homes during the course of the last few decades. We are deeply saddened by this situation.



The Rohingya people have the right to citizenship in accordance with laws founded on the principles of basic human rights,

federalism and democracy.

Voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation for Rohingya people, is an issue of vital importance.





The Burmese army, an institution which for decades has claimed to promote national unity,

has finally managed to unite the country...

against itself.



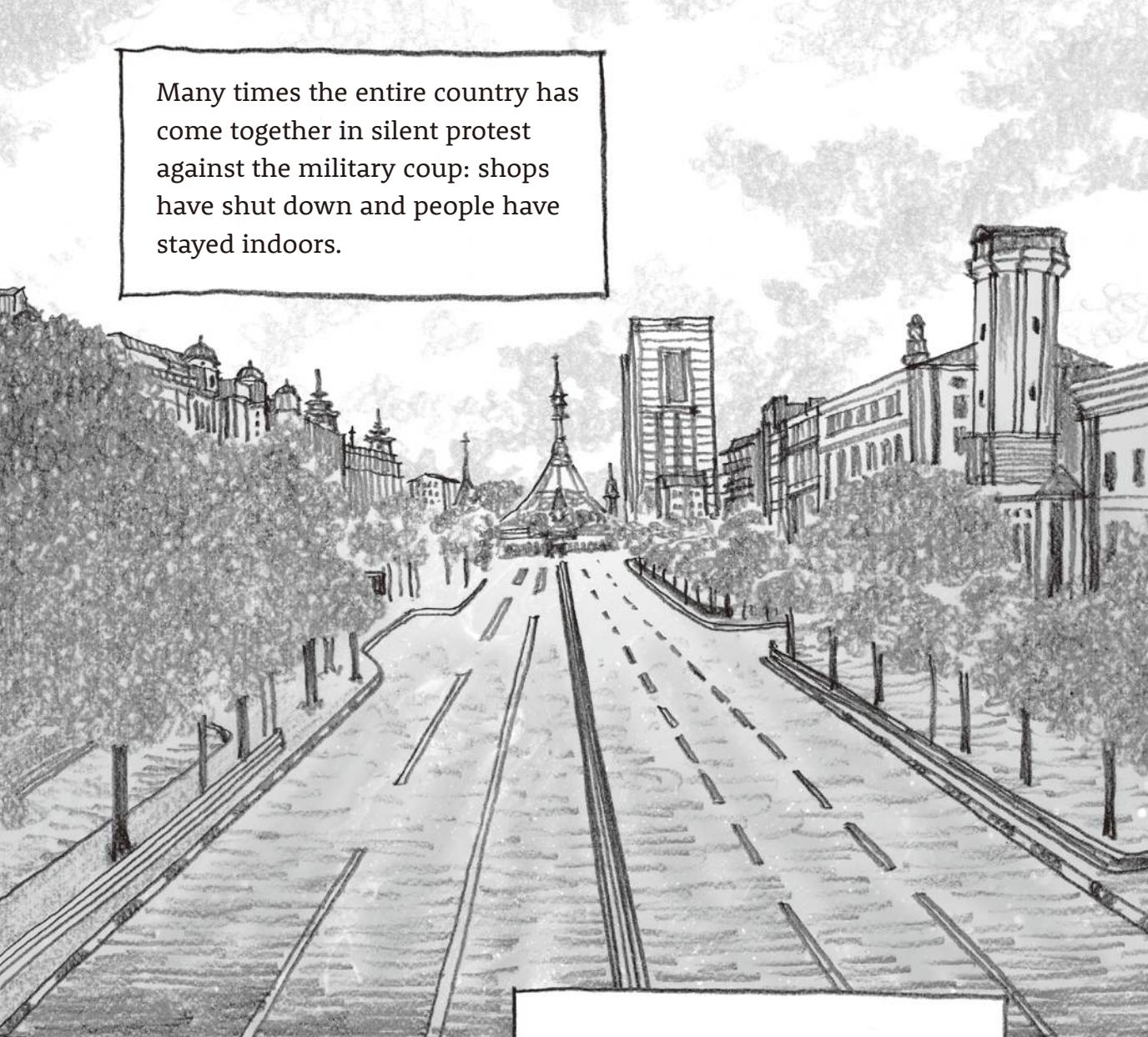
But



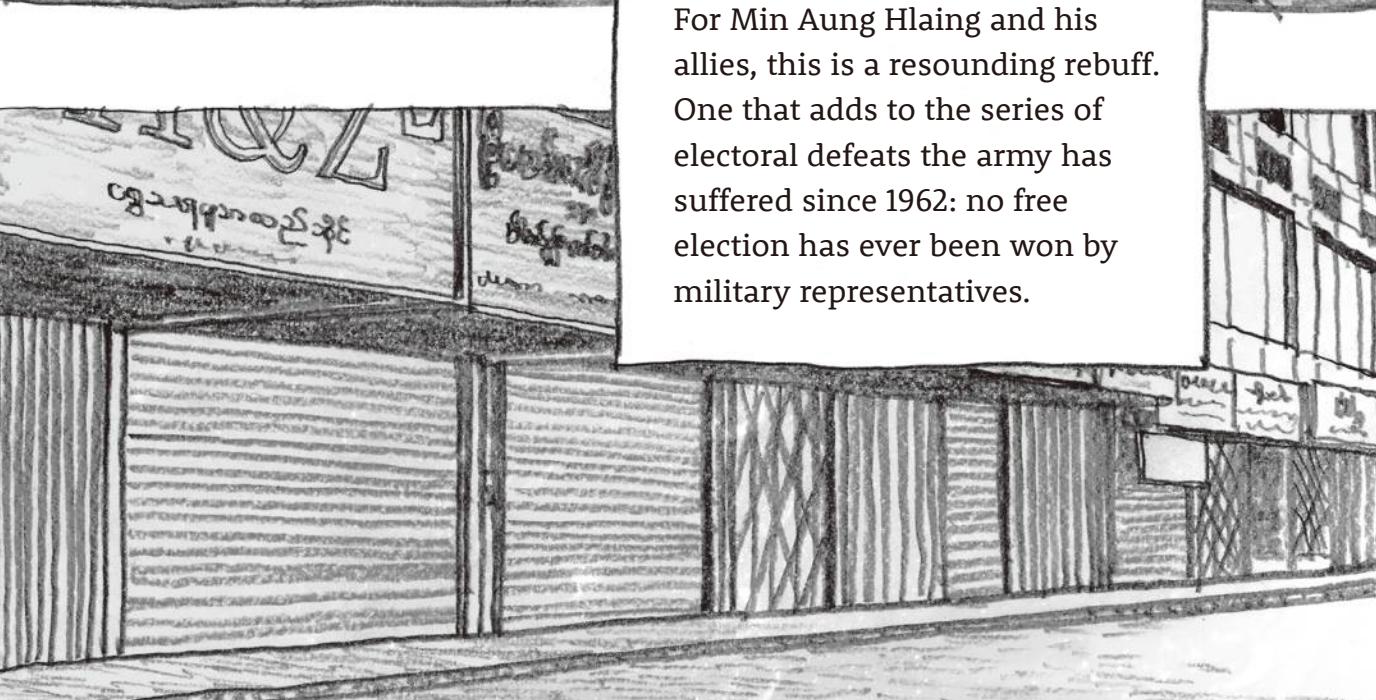
can this fragile, new unity



survive another
army victory?

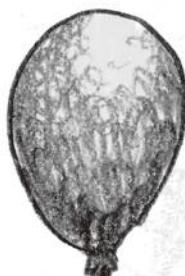
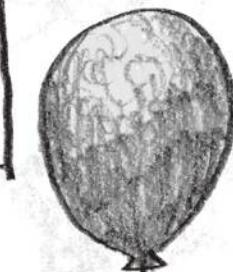


Many times the entire country has come together in silent protest against the military coup: shops have shut down and people have stayed indoors.



For Min Aung Hlaing and his allies, this is a resounding rebuff. One that adds to the series of electoral defeats the army has suffered since 1962: no free election has ever been won by military representatives.

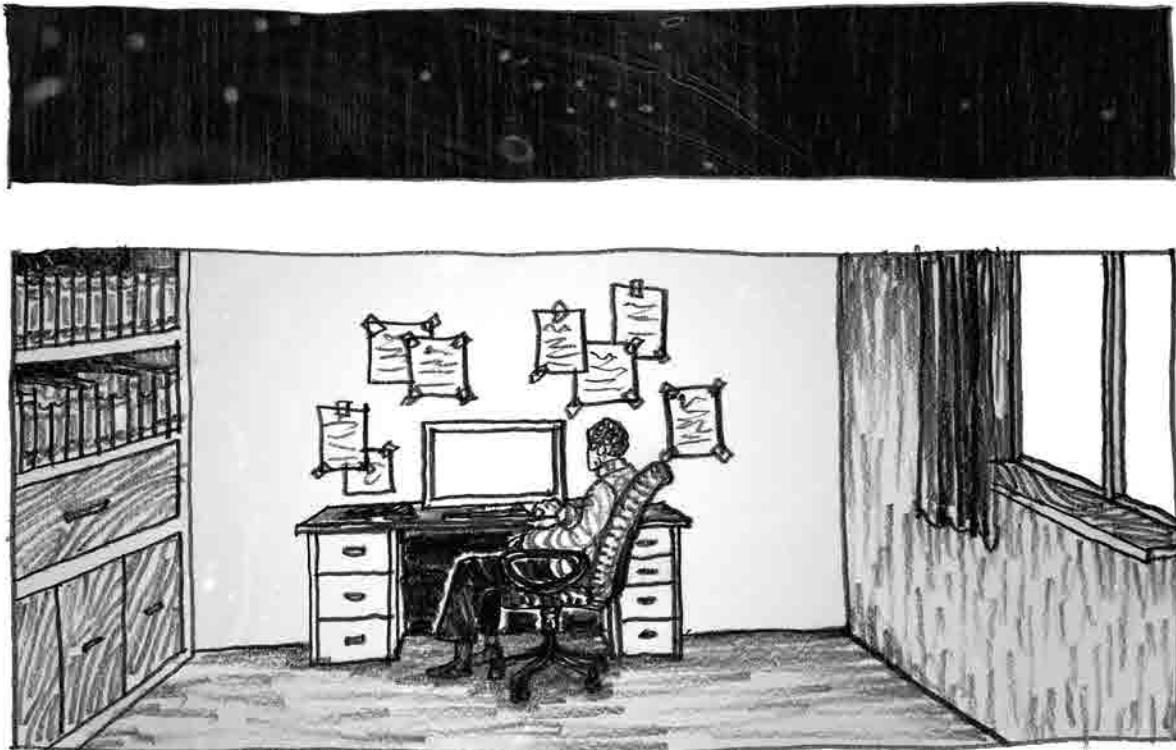
But the pressures of life under military rule could revive tensions within the country's population.



So the clock is ticking. And the Burmese people have realised that they must take things into their own hands.



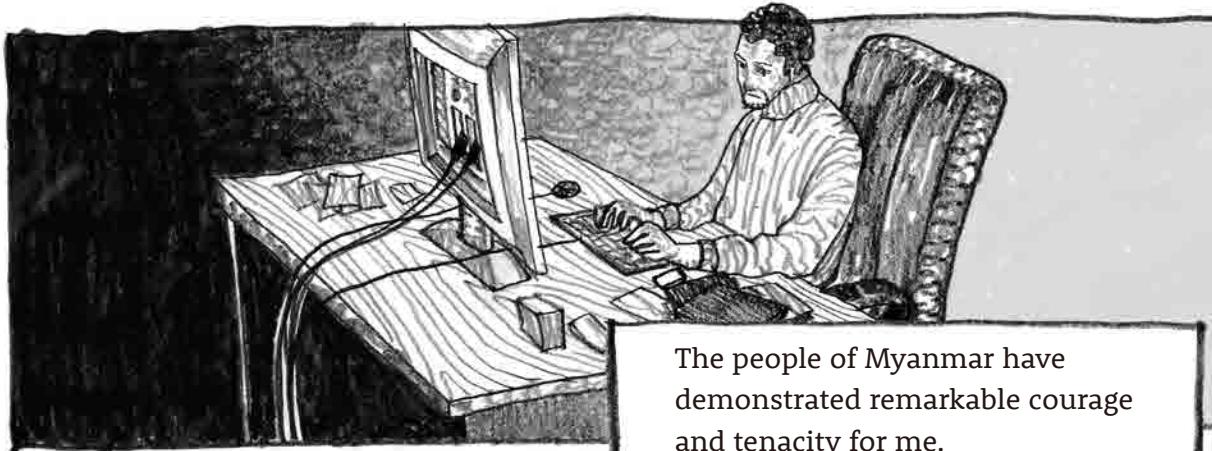
#EverythingWillBeOK



After a few months
of frenetic calls from
journalists,

my phone has almost
stopped ringing.





The people of Myanmar have demonstrated remarkable courage and tenacity for me.

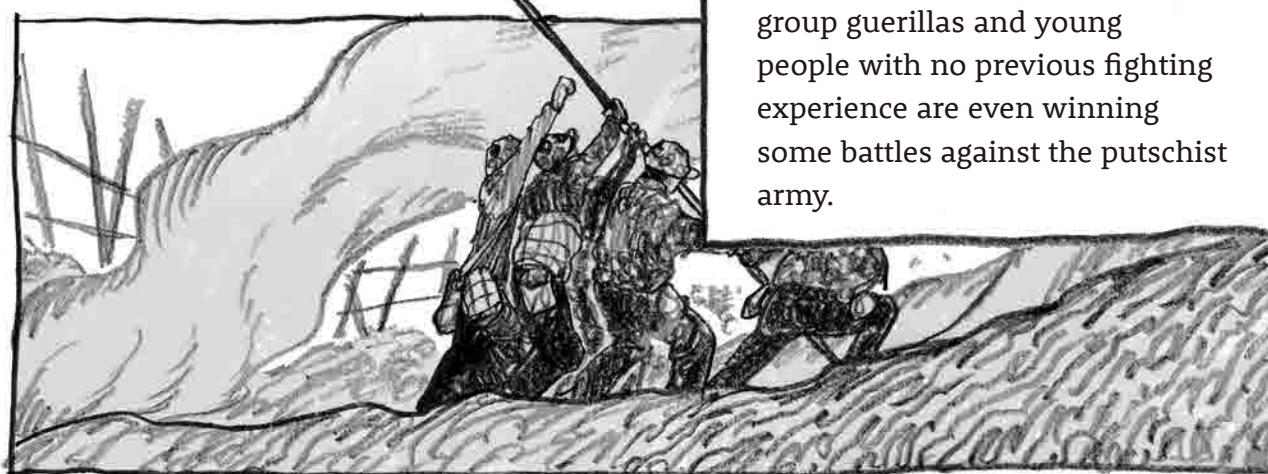


The press may no longer be watching,

but resistance to military rule continues in various forms:



protests, economic obstruction and armed combat. The minority group guerillas and young people with no previous fighting experience are even winning some battles against the putschist army.



I read the words of 20-year-old Fox:



"Everyone is scared of being hurt or being killed,

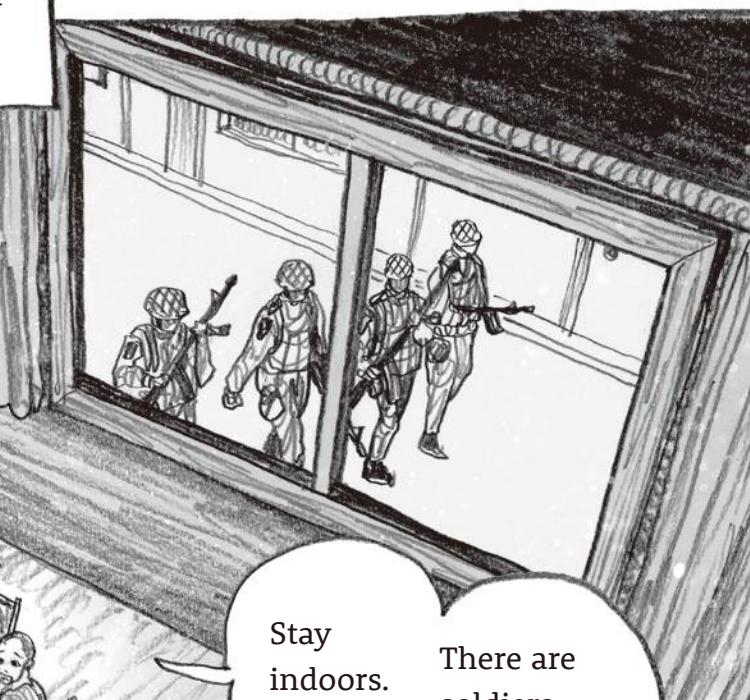
...but at the same time it's scarier to think about what the military would do if they win this."



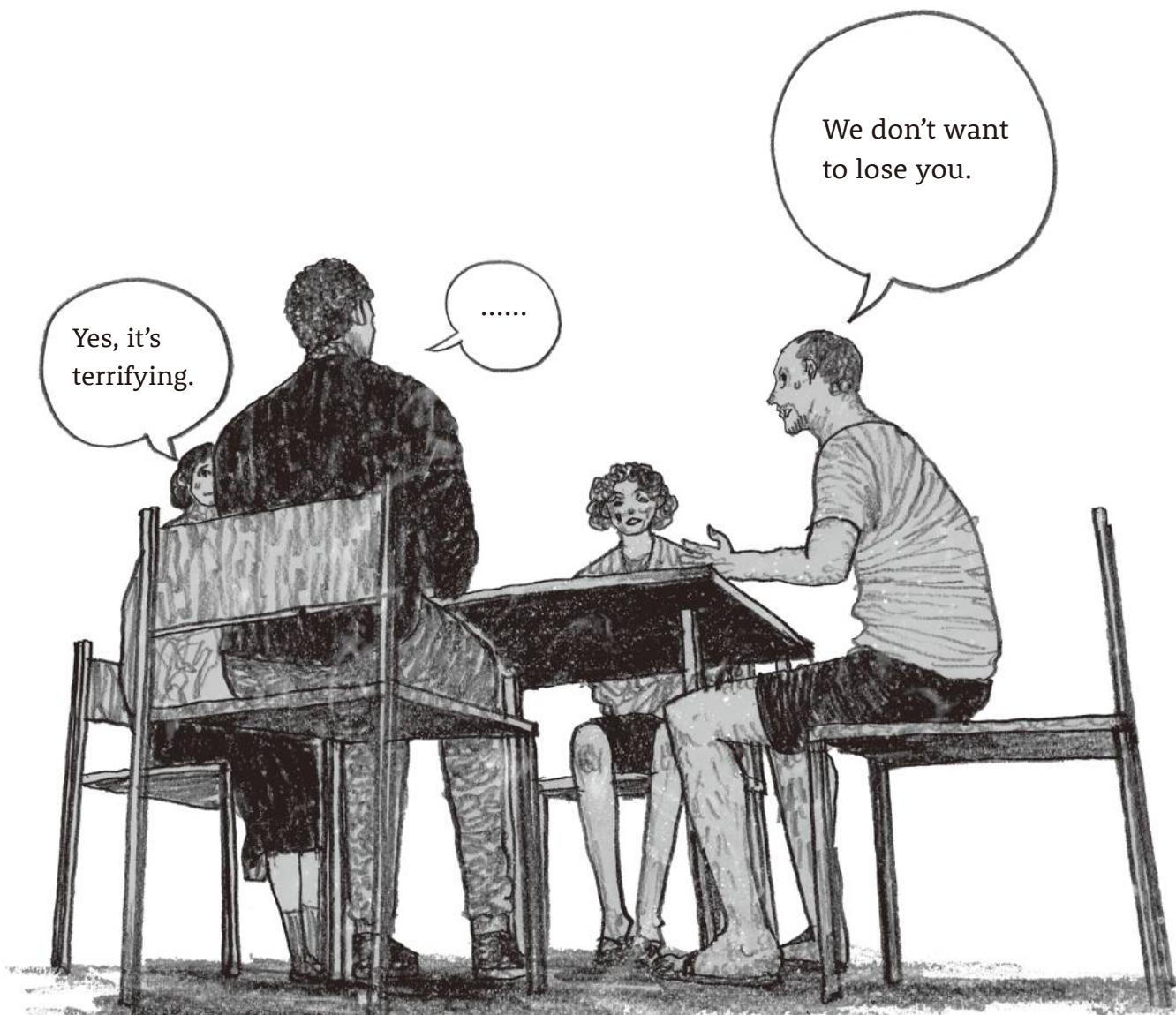
You were out late again.

Stay indoors.

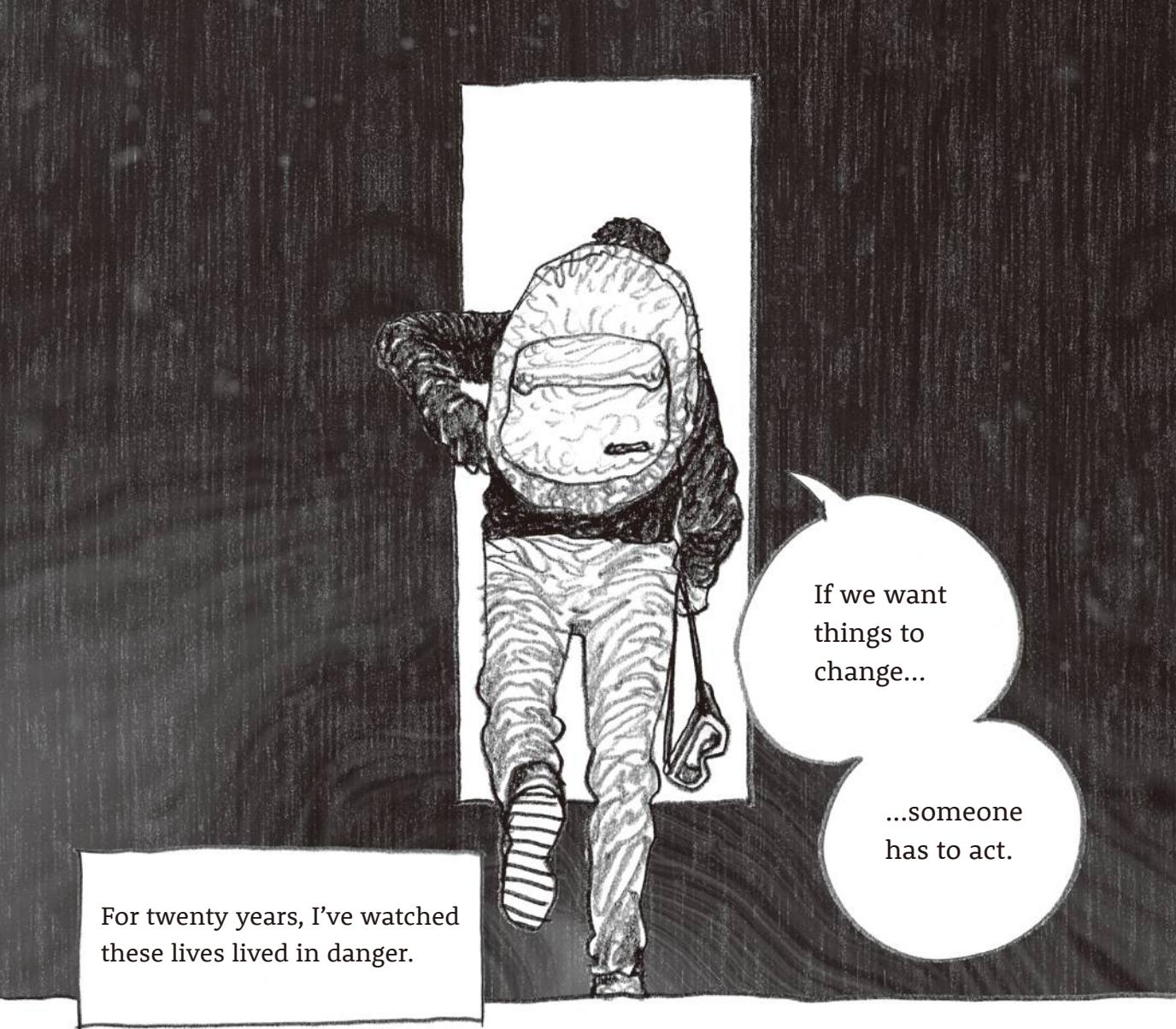
There are soldiers everywhere.



"And that's what the older generation don't get at the moment, they keep saying: 'No, don't go out now, it's dangerous'



but if we don't go out now and fight for this, it's going to be dangerous for the rest of our lives."



For twenty years, I've watched
these lives lived in danger.

If we want
things to
change...

...someone
has to act.

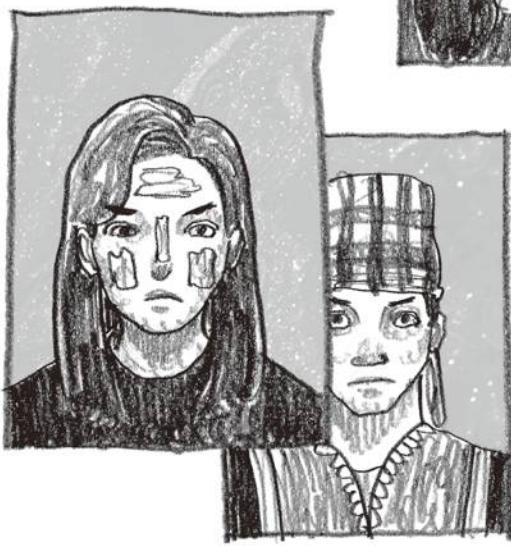


I can't stand by
and do nothing.

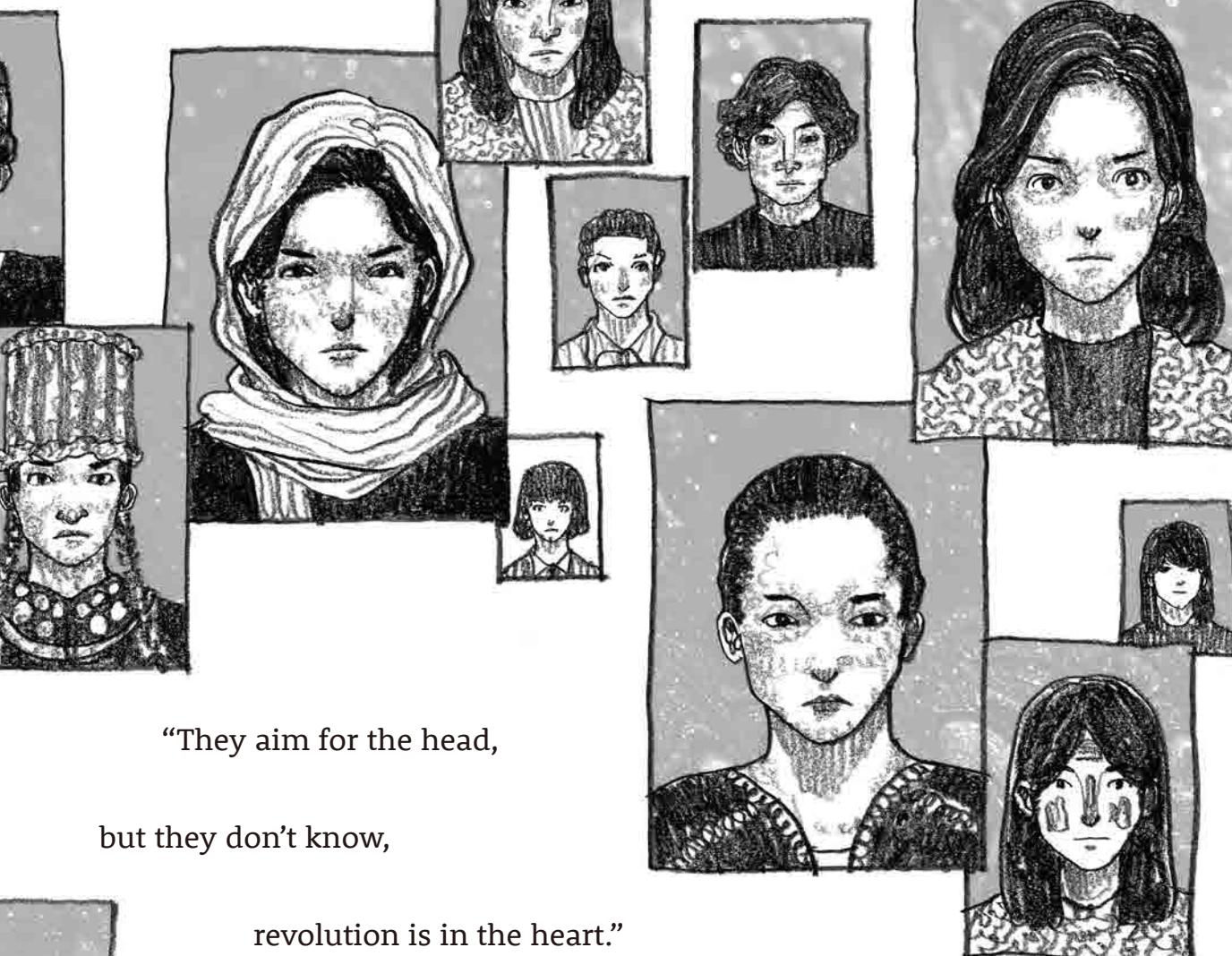
And I've witnessed
the courage and
dignity of a people.











“They aim for the head,
but they don’t know,
revolution is in the heart.”

— Khet Thi, Burmese poet, died on May 9, 2021 in custody after torture.

To my Burmese ex-girlfriend
and to the only person I've ever wanted
to think of as my little sister.

To Kyal Sin.

To everyone

Frédéric Debomy

Freedom is like air. Those who live under the shade of freedom take it for granted, and tend to forget how precious it truly is. I hope everyone can understand that there is always a cruel and heavy price to pay for freedom, and that we must always cherish it, for it has been bought with countless sacrifices.

Lau Kwong-Shing

References

A book like this would not have been possible without accurate information. Frédéric therefore want to thank all those who continue to filter reliable information out of the country, including the journalists and press outlets who carry on risky investigative work in Myanmar. Some of the quotes in the book have been drawn from conversations he has had with various people. The words of Zoya Phan come in part from a speech she gave in Oslo in May of 2011, and the words of the character on pages 13 to 17 are inspired both by a conversation Frédéric had with a young Burmese man from Yangon, as well as a press article. He sourced other quotes from the articles listed below. Some of the words have been altered, but we have been careful not to change the meaning. To bring the story to life, Lau Kwong-Shing had the idea of putting the quotes into speech bubbles, and placing the words in the mouths of characters on the page, most of whom are fictional. We hope the original speakers will not mind, our sole aim has always been to make their voices heard.

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Myanmar, the last stand

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COMMUNICATION Yao Li-Li

SUPPORT Ministry of Culture, The Cultural Taiwan Foundation

SPECIAL THANKS SEA PLATEAUS, Bruno Genini, Muriel Schmit

PUBLISHER Slowork Publishing

WEBSITE www.sloworkpublishing.com

EMAIL contact@sloworkpublishing.com

DISTRIBUTOR Red Ants Books Co., Ltd.

PUBLICATION DATE February 2023

FIRST EDITION FIRST PRINT

EISBN 9786269649358 (PDF)

THREE PAGES
ONE DOLLAR

